



### 3-6 DISCOVER The Ladder

## Historical First Climb

William Rogers and his assistant, Willard Ripley, were local ranchers. They became famous by being the first to climb to the top of Devils Tower. They accomplished this feat by building a 350 foot ladder. First, they drove wooden pegs into a vertical crack on the southeast side of the Tower and then they connected the outer edge of the pegs with a wooden strip. This construction took several months to complete.

The celebrated event, which Rogers and Ripley had promoted and advertised, drew about 1,000 spectators on July 4, 1893. People arrived on horseback or by wagon to watch the famous climb. Many had journeyed several days, covering more than 100 miles, to participate in the celebration.

Rogers reached the top of Devils Tower in about an hour. Before his **descent** (climb down), he staked the American flag, "Old Glory," at the top of the Tower. By afternoon, strong winds blew the flag down. The enterprising stars of the day cut the flag into small pieces and sold them as souvenirs.

Two years later, on July 4, 1895, Mrs. Linnie Rogers, wife of William Rogers, climbed the ladder to become the first woman to **ascend** (climb up) Devils Tower.

You can see portions of the stake ladder today by looking through the pipe tube on the Tower Trail.

